

To: The Federal Communications Commission  
From: Isle of Wight County Schools  
Re: CC Docket No. 02-06  
Date: September 17, 2008

Isle of Wight County Schools hereby lends its support to the proposed addition of "telephone broadcast messaging" to the list of services eligible for support under the schools and libraries ("E-rate") program

It is well known that improving communications between educators, students, and parents can play a vital role in improving educational performance at all grade levels. Telephone messaging broadcasting provides significant benefits over the less efficient means which schools traditionally used to reach out to students and parents, such as hand-delivered written notices and phone trees.

We have used our telephone broadcast messaging service to notify parents of testing schedules, parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, and special events happening at their child's school. As a result, more parents are informed about what's going on at their child's school.

We have also used our service to notify parents in the case of emergencies. There was a tornado warning near two of our elementary schools right at their time of dismissal. Parents were notified that the children were being held in the building until the severe weather passed. Parents received frequent information as to where their children were and when they would be leaving school. This service was tremendous in getting this information out immediately to those parents.

In another case, we had a lockdown at one of our high schools. We were able to quickly notify parents before they started receiving bits and pieces of incorrect information from media sources and rumors.

In enacting the E-rate program in 1996, Congress recognized that many schools and libraries have limited resources that constrain their access to emerging technologies that can enhance and support their educational mission. Telephone broadcast messaging, which allows schools to more efficiently and effectively communicate with students and parents, is a prime example of such emerging technology and should be included within the E-rate program's list of eligible services.

Sincerely,

Lynn B. Briggs  
Executive Administrator  
(Research, Technology, & Planning)  
Isle of Wight County Schools

Smithfield, VA 23430